

# Commission News



## An Update to the Commissioners of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission

**Full Commission Meeting Blackstone, MA June 16, 2005**

### COMMISSION FUNDING CONTINUES

The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission's fiscal year 2005 heritage development program has been announced. An amount of \$500,000 was awarded to the Blackstone Corridor Commission this year through the National Park Service's federal appropriations for Corridor communities and partner organizations committed to preserving our heritage and promoting the Blackstone Valley.

Senator Lincoln Chafee stated that "It is rewarding to see how the Corridor Commission's projects have been a catalyst for continued public and private investments that are improving the Blackstone Valley's environment and economic vitality."

Over \$20 million in federal funds through the National Park Service have ignited a partnership that has undertaken over 400 projects and leveraged \$500 million in other funds to preserve and restore the Valley's natural and historic resources while encouraging sound economic development.

Congressman Jim McGovern stated, "As the Corridor Commission works toward its goals related to heritage and cultural preservation, river recovery, and balancing growth and economic development, I appreciate the diversity of programs supported by this federal funding. With a focus on enhancing the environment within and around the watershed, Massachusetts residents and visitors will see a benefit from Commission projects."

Senator Jack Reed stated, "The Blackstone Valley represents a significant aspect of our national history and all the citizens of Rhode Island are beneficiaries of the preservation of natural and cultural resources."

"The Blackstone Valley's future is based on the success stories we see coming from the vision of the heritage corridor," said Congressman Patrick Kennedy. "The building of the Blackstone Bikeway, the revitalization of our industrial mills and village

centers and the cleanup of the Blackstone River remain high priorities in regard to the quality of life for Rhode Island residents and the visitors who seek out the Valley. In reviewing the accomplishments supported by this program, I am pleased to have been able to assist in securing this funding."

The following partnership projects supported by this funding include:

Bikeway Planning: , \$10,000

Blackstone Canal Preservation: priority projects identified in the canal report, \$30,000

Blackstone Gorge Bi-State Park: complete park access to the river, \$30,000

Blackstone River Theatre: heritage programming, \$20,000

Commission Events: cultural events throughout the Valley, \$47,000

Corridor Communications: to provide information Corridor-wide through publications, brochures, and the internet, \$140,000

Critical Site Planning: to support unexpected community planning needs, \$20,000

Intermodal Tour and Interpretation Program , \$15,000

Middle River Park Bridge Design: as part public access development adjacent to the Northern Gateway Visitor Center, \$10,000

Museum of Work and Culture: support future development planning, \$20,000

Northern Gateway Visitor Center: development of the exhibits for the Valley visitor center in Worcester, \$50,000

River Visioning: Riverway community designs, \$30,000

Valley Identity System: integrated signs and way finding systems, \$30,000

Blackstone Valley Tourism Program: for the bi-state tourism program, \$80,000

Waters Farm: building preservation and rehabilitation, \$30,000

Blackstone Watershed Coalition: to engage and coordinate interagency activities, \$20,000.

STAFF CONTACT – SUE ANDREWS.

### NORTHERN GATEWAY CHARETTE

A ride through Quinsigamond Village these days reveals a major construction zone where the MA Turnpike/Route 146 Interchange project is moving forward. One structure among all

this activity seems to sit untouched in the midst of Hurley Square... the Washburn Moen Building, the future Northern Gateway Visitor Center. While the building itself shows no outward signs of change, there is much happening surrounding its role as the next Corridor visitor center. The Worcester Historical Museum Board is looking toward the prospect of moving their home to Quinsigamond Village. The Worcester County Convention & Visitor Bureau is also investigating the opportunity to move to the Washburn Moen Building and as part of that to become the operator of the visitor center. To further this process, two exhibit design firms and three architectural firms participated in an intense workshop to craft and convey conceptual renderings of a future facility. After a focused introduction to the project each firm presented to a wider audience from the Corridor Commission, Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester CVB, Quinsigamond Village Task Force, Canal Task Force, and others. Their ideas were well-received and a part of the next phase will involve selection of firms to move closer toward design and construction. STAFF CONTACT – SUE ANDREWS.

## EXPEDITION 2005



Expedition 2005 is drawing near. This is an opportunity for all to celebrate the successes of the past five years since Expedition 2000. It also provides the opportunity to look at the future's challenges with open eyes. This unique opportunity to experience the Riverway should not be missed! Warm up on your bicycle and canoe skills leading up to June. A series of community events are planned along the route, including a Polish Festival, a community dinner, and a Celtic music concert. For more information, visit [blackstoneexpedition05.com](http://blackstoneexpedition05.com) Mark your calendars for June 15-18 when Expedition 2005 will venture from Worcester to Central Falls, reprising the spirit of Expedition 2000, and looking at STAFF CONTACT – SUE ANDREWS.

## RIVERWAYS

### Mark Your Calendars for the Greenway Challenge



*Billington, Mosczinski and Maas at the Finish Line*

The Greenway Challenge, the Blackstone River Valley's signature adventure race, is scheduled for Saturday, September 24, 2005. Through the generous support of the Corridor Commission and numerous sponsors, it will celebrate its fifth continuous year!

Several exciting changes are in the works to make this year's Challenge better than ever. An Advisory Board has been established to guide and further develop the educational and recreational potential of the Greenway Challenge event. Corporate, Women's, Senior and Tri-athlete are among the divisions added to encourage greater participation. The Greenway Challenge also continues to promote the development of greenways and 'blueways' throughout the Valley, and an alliance has been forged with Blackstone Valley Youth Leadership Academy to help cultivate the future stewards of our National Heritage Corridor.

Advisory Board members and the Greenway Challenge Logistics Committee continue to iron out the details of this year's route. More information can be found at [www.GreenwayChallenge.org](http://www.GreenwayChallenge.org) and an electronic newsletter is keeping past participants and friends up-to-date with the event as it unfolds. STAFF CONTACT – BARBARA DIXON.

### BRC's Water Quality Program Receives Prestigious EPA Award

Congratulations to the Blackstone River Coalition's Watershed-wide Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program! The program was recently selected by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to receive an Environmental Merit Award. EPA Regional Administrator, Robert Varney, stated that the annual award "recognizes outstanding environmental advocates who have made significant contributions toward preserving and

protecting our natural resources” and that the Blackstone River Coalition was nominated for “its exceptional work and commitment to the environment in 2004.” A special award ceremony will be held at Faneuil Hall in Boston on May 17th. Representatives from the Blackstone Headwaters Coalition (BHC), Blackstone River Watershed Association (BRWA), Blackstone River Watershed Council (BRWC), Mass Audubon and the Corridor Commission will all be recognized at the ceremony.

### A True “Big Night” for 2005



*Evan Welch and Kevin Lyon at Purgatory Chasm*

During the weekend of April 2nd, the conditions were right for “Big Night 2005.” With temperatures in the mid-40’s and a fairly steady rain, wood frogs and mole salamanders throughout many Blackstone Valley communities migrated across busy roads to return to their natal vernal

pools to mate. And as usual, numerous volunteers were present to safely assist the little critters. Whether it was the boy scouts in Burrillville, middle school students at Purgatory Chasm, Corridor Commission staff members and VIPs, or volunteers from Mass Audubon or the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, everyone seemed to have a “magical” (albeit soggy) experience. STAFF CONTACT – KAREN MATELESKA.

## BVI

### Leadership Blackstone Valley



The 2004/2005 Class of Leadership Blackstone Valley is coming to a close. On Thursday, May 26th the participants will be graduating at River Bend Farm in Uxbridge at 5:00pm. This has been a lively class with a lot of transition. 5 out of the 19 participants who started the class have changed jobs. This has resulted in some turmoil in the group, but does not seem to have detracted from the overall quality of the experience for the

remaining participants.

Here is a taste of this year’s experience for LBV participants: The topic for the LBV session in March was the “Changing Face of the Blackstone Valley”. The agenda included a workshop on becoming “culturally competent” presented by Deoshore Haig, a well known trainer in Rhode Island. The class then joined LBV alumni and guests at the Museum of Work and Culture for a luncheon. During lunch attendees had an opportunity to learn

about Central Falls, RI. Joining us was Betty Crowley, the Town Clerk and a lifetime resident of the city and Edwin Cancel, Executive Director of Progreso Latino, an agency located in the city that provides education, training, economic development and housing services to the residents of Northern Rhode Island. We learned quite a bit about the City. For example: do you know that the first group of Latinos to arrive in Central Falls from Columbia was recruited by a Columbian company that, at the time, was starting a subsidiary in the US. The Latino population has grown to be 47.8% of the population of Central Falls (2000 census). Some say that in 2005 it is closer to 60%. We also learned that

43% of the Latino population is under the age of 19 and 60% is under the age of 30.

After lunch we had a panel discussion on the status of affordable housing, family services and elder services in the Valley. We ended the day with a tour of the Museum and a short play on life in Woonsocket in 1929.

April’s session, “Preserving the Natural Resources of the Valley” was a great success with Donna Williams and Johanna Hunter facilitating. Mike Ferry and a team of students from Woonsocket H.S. taught the participants how to screen for “bugs” in the river. We learned that what lives in the water is a good indication of how clean it is. In the afternoon we talked about open space preservation.

On Thursday, May 26th, the Class graduates. Please join us for the graduation at River Bend Farm at 5:00 pm. STAFF CONTACT – HALFORD WELCH.

### Four Towns

The Heritage Corridor has been providing continuing technical assistance to the Towns of Douglas, Sutton, Northbridge and Uxbridge. The group has been working to develop a master plan for the area along Route 146 within all of the four towns. Currently this area is plagued by differences in zoning and awkward town divisional lines. All of these things have impacted the future development of the property in a sensitive way. The Heritage Corridor was requested by the Four Towns Committee to provide technical assistance in planning so that the area may be developed in a “Blackstone Valley” way protecting the resources along the Mumford River and providing for new context sensitive development. The property within the study area consists of approximately 1700 acres. Several meetings have been held with property owners as well as elected official this spring. The concept of developing a master plan has been well received by all. The Four Towns Committee anticipates a release for a RFP sometime this summer. STAFF CONTACT – HALFORD WELCH.

### Woonsocket Connections





*Ceiling Decoration at the Stadium Theater*

Staff of the Blackstone Heritage Corridor has been assisting the Woonsocket Main Street and Riverfront Initiative in developing a new work program for the organization. Part of the work

program includes the development of a more active committee process for the board to move forward redevelopment objectives. As part of the planning committee the Heritage Corridor has provided technical assistance to study the need for a master urban design plan for the downtown. This spring the Corridor helped facilitate a Connections workshop with over 35 people in attendance to identify resources with the downtown including the Museum of Work and Culture, Stadium Theater, downtown housing, Main Street, Market Square and other area points of interest and how to connect these better with each other in order to develop a more cohesive downtown for the future. For more information on the project please go to [www.ci.socket.ri.us](http://www.ci.socket.ri.us). Recommendations in the plan will be incorporated into further master planning strategies for Downtown Woonsocket. STAFF CONTACT – HALFORD WELCH.

## TOURISM

### Public Relations Campaign V

The tourism collaborative thanks the Commission for funding Campaign V. The funding will be used for advertising the valley in regional publications and visitor guides. This year's funding will also provide for additional base-line visitor research through the Travel Industry of America. This research will be enhanced by additional research conducted through the University of Michigan for the Heritage Alliance, MGM Study. This study will provide for original visitor research on select heritage corridors throughout the country. It is anticipated that the TIA study will be completed in the Fall and used to guide discussions at a tourism summit to be held to develop budgets for the upcoming year.

### Footsteps in History



*Evans School Chepachet, RI*

Additional projects funded through this agreement include a Footsteps in History weekend to be held on Columbus Day weekend in October. This event is being designed to engage all of the historic sites in the valley around an open house. An initial interest meeting has been held where the concept received enthusiastic support. Staff is also working with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to affiliate the program with Preserve America. STAFF CONTACT – HALFORD WELCH OR BARBARA DIXON.

## INTERPRETATION

### Rangers offer Walkabouts again in 2005

The Park Rangers and volunteers of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor will once again be offering their Thursday Night Walkabouts this summer. The Walkabouts are free public tours, offered on Thursday evenings at 6:30 PM from June through August. Each week you will have a chance to explore a new community or head down an unknown trail and discover some of the people and places that make the Blackstone Valley such a fascinating place. This year's schedule includes the following program.

**June 2: Hopedale.** 6:30 PM at the Hopedale Unitarian Church, Hopedale Street, Hopedale.

**June 9: Chestnut Hill Meeting House.** 6:30 pm at the Chestnut Hill Meeting House, Chestnut Street, Millville. For more information, call (401) 762-0440

**June 23: Uncovering the Blackstone Canal in Worcester.** 6:30 p.m. at St. John's Church, 44 Temple Street, Worcester.

**June 30: Lonsdale, Lincoln.** 6:30 p.m. at the Lincoln School Department Building, 1624 Lonsdale Avenue.

**July 7: Arnold Mills, Cumberland.** 6:30 p.m. by the falls on Sneece Pond. Contact the Heritage Corridor at (401) 762-0440

**July 14: Blackstone River Bikeway.** 6:30 p.m. at the Bikeway Entrance at the old Lonsdale Drive In – John Street (Rt. 123), Lincoln RI. Contact the Heritage Corridor at (401) 762-0440.

**July 28: The Underground Railroad.** This free program begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Uxbridge Quaker Meetinghouse, Rt. 146A. Contact the Heritage Corridor at (401) 762-0440

**July 21: Great Road Lincoln.** This free tour begins at 6:30 p.m. at Hearthside, Great Road, Lincoln.

**August 4: Whitinsville, Northbridge.** This free program will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Whittin Social Library, Church Street, Whitinsville.

**August 11: Goat Hill Lock.** This free program begins at 6:30 p.m. at the trailhead to Goat Hill Lock, Hartford Avenue, Uxbridge across from the Tri-River Health Center.

**August 18: Blackstone Gorge.** Contact the Heritage Corridor at (401) 762-0440

**August 25: Woonsocket.** This free tour begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Woonsocket Falls, River Street - Woonsocket. Contact the Heritage Corridor at (401) 762-0440

## PADDLE CLUB



The paddle club is gearing up for another great year. Many thanks are due to the staff and volunteers who have made this program such a huge success. To join in the fun, the following is a list of this year's scheduled event. For more information contact the Heritage Corridor offices.

Date	Paddle Club Location
May 17 & 18	Slatersville Reservoir, North Smithfield, RI
May 24 & 25	West River, Uxbridge, MA

May 31 & June 1

Fisherville, Grafton, MA to Riverdale, Northbridge, MA (Shuttle)

June 07

Stump Pond, Smithfield, RI (Training)

June 08

Stump Pond, Smithfield, RI

June 14 & 15  
WEEK

NO TRIP - EXPEDITION

June 21 & 22

S. Uxbridge Drive-In to Rt. 122 Millville, MA (Shuttle)

June 28 & 29

Rt. 16 to Rt. 122, Uxbridge, MA (Shuttle)

July 05

Indian Lake, Worcester, MA (Training)

July 06

Indian Lake, Worcester, MA

July 12 & 13

Kelly House to Pratt Dam Lincoln, RI (Shuttle)

July 19 & 20

River Bend Farm River and Canal Loop, Uxbridge, MA

July 26 & 27

Collier Point Park/ Waterplace Park, Providence, RI

August 2

Bowdish Lake, Gloucester, RI (Training)

August 3

Bowdish Lake, Gloucester, RI

August 9 & 10

Valley Falls Pond, Cumberland, RI

August 16 & 17

Lackey Dam Pond, Sutton, MA

August 23 & 24

Spring Lake, Burrillville, RI - End of season party - VIP appreciation

## Along the Blackstone

Kayaking and Canoeing is the River Central Theme of Episode #61 of The Region's Cable Television Series, Along the Blackstone."

"Valley Voices Tell the Tale of the Factory Farms – Along the Blackstone Show #62"

Using the great resource of Blackstone Valley residents to tell their own stories of farming and at the same time highlighting new Exhibits at the River Bend Farm Visitor Center and the Kelly House Visitor Center, the Corridor's own cable television series continues to tell the untold stories of the Blackstone Valley.

At River Bend Farm, John Pelczarski and Val Stegemoen tell about their new exhibit, Following the Plough, as they talk about the changing landscape of the Valley from an agricultural, pastoral landscape to an industrial one. Corridor staff worked closely with DCR, John and Val to bring these new stories to light. In Rhode Island, the Kelly House Visitor Center talks about the Factory Farm through the use of the colorful garden next to the Kelly House. The father-son historian team of Al and Kevin Klyberg take us through the industrial growth of the 19th and 20th centuries and its need for fresh food.

These stories told by the men who worked these farms and created an environment that many would like to see again. Such voices as River Bend Farm dairyman, Stanley Oleksyk, Elmwood

Dairyman, Wayne Stinson, both of Uxbridge, Ray Johnson of Blackberry Hill Farm, formerly the farm for the Linen Thread Company of the New England Village, North Grafton, and John Baker and Frank Cassidy talking about the Castle Hill Farm, part of the Whitin Machine Works dynasty. And who better to put the concept of a “factory farm” in the proper context than our old friend, Bud Gurney of Waters Farm Preservation.

So, check out the new Along the Blackstone episode and drive by the Whitins 100 acre lot and see what a real stone wall looks like. STAFF CONTACT – CHUCK ARNING.

## VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS PROGRAM (VIP)

### Volunteering for Clean Water!!



The Second annual Clean Water Fest, held at Rhode Island College March 13th was a resounding success. Led by VIP's Mike and Janice Ferry, Tammy Gilpatrick & VIP Commissioner Donna Williams. The many exhibits were set up in a fair-like atmosphere in the Donovan Dining Center. Valley high school student were signed up as

VIP's and made fun and educational presentations. Many Corridor partners also helped to educate the 1120 junior high school students from both Massachusetts and Rhode Island about the importance of maintaining water quality for the benefit of all. An incredible 940 volunteer hours were recorded by the volunteers.

### Service Learning Project



The first class participating in the Youth Leadership Blackstone Valley program planned and implemented a service/learning

project on April 16th at River Bend Farm in Uxbridge, MA. They were signed up as “Volunteers in Parks” volunteers and along with their mentors from the VIP corps and from the alumni of Leadership Blackstone Valley, did a shoreline clean-up of the Blackstone Canal, a clean-up of the towpath, and installed a number of wood duck boxes along the river & canal. (Happy Ducks!)

Hats Off to the alumni from Leadership Blackstone Valley and to our VIP's: Julie Riendeau, Charlene Berry, Ed Halpin, Mike Ferry, Kathy Barton, Roy Henry, Joe Baer, Cyndee and Ralph Bianco and Keith Hainley. The group contributed 165 volunteer hours that day to beautify the park. STAFF CONTACT – SUZANNE BUCHANAN.

## STAFF NOTES

### Larry Gall



Lawrence (Larry) D. Gall who served as the first executive director of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (1988-1989) returns as the interim director of the Heritage Corridor. Currently serving as deputy associate regional director for planning and partnerships in the Northeast Region, Gall has held responsibility for heritage area

and other partnership programs throughout the 13-state region. Thirteen out of the twenty-seven congressionally designated Heritage Areas are in the Northeast Region.

In his 30 years with the National Park Service (NPS), working in a variety of capacities, Gall has focused on furthering the NPS's mission through outreach and partnerships. His responsibilities include resource management, research, interpretive planning and program management, exhibit and audiovisual planning, and conferences—both as planner and participant. He began his NPS career as historian at Adams National Historical Park (Quincy, MA) in 1975. For ten years he worked at Lowell National Historical Park, an early model for partnership parks, as a planner, chief of visitor services, and eventually Deputy Superintendent.

At Lowell Larry managed a series of multi-million-dollar projects that brought together the skills of academic historians, exhibit and audiovisual planners, and architects with local community interests to produce the Boott Mills museum and other visitor facilities.

After his tour of duty at Blackstone, Gall served as superintendent of Minute Man National Historical Park (Concord, Lexington, and Lincoln, MA). There he built a strong constituency for needed park expansion at all levels of government, and with local and regional museums, schools, and heritage tourism interests. Since 1994 he has worked in central office assignments in the Northeast Region.



Currently he chairs a national NPS initiative to raise the public profile of the American Revolution and its multiple meanings through commemoration of the 225th anniversary of the Revolutionary War. He recently completed service on the board of directors of the National Council for Public History. Larry holds degrees in history from Kenyon College and Harvard University. He and his wife Diane live in Arlington (MA) and have two daughters, Sarah and Amy.

#### Dan Wegner



Dan Wegner is our New Park Ranger with responsibilities in education, interpretation, project development and management. He has taught courses in Recreation and Park Administration at five different universities, most recently at California State University in Long Beach. He has a Ph.D. in Recreation and Resources Development from Texas A&M University, with minors in

Management/Marketing and Outdoor Education, and a Masters Degree in Recreation and Park Administration from Clemson University with an emphasis in Resource Management and Interpretation. For his Masters Degree he did his project on using oral history for the interpretation of a textile mill village in South Carolina, and his Doctoral Dissertation dealt with measuring visitor satisfaction and future intended behavior at the Lyndon B. Johnson National and State Historical Parks. He also has a B.A. Degree in History from Wheaton College, IL and an M.A. in Christian Education from the North American Baptist Seminary. Dan has worked for the National Park Service at Glacier National Park (MT), Death Valley National Park (CA), the Blue Ridge Parkway (NC), and Castillo de San Marcos National Monument (FL).

#### Charlene Berry



The Corridor welcomes Charlene Berry who has been hired as our new Cooperative Agreement Specialist. Charlene comes to the Commission after working for the last 22 years with US Army, Corps of Engineers as a Park Ranger and Forester. Welcome Charlene!

#### Karen Mateleska

After serving as Biologist for the Corridor Commission for the past three years, Karen Mateleska has decided to move on to other opportunities. Over the next year, she'll be applying to graduate school, with the ultimate goal of receiving an M.B.A. Karen was first involved with the Corridor Commission as a VIP during her Junior year in high school. Over the years, she worked her way up the ranks, from a VIP to seasonal Ranger to Staff Biologist. Karen spent much of her time working on various environmental projects including the development of the Blackstone River Coalition, the Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone River by 2015 Campaign, and the BRC's Watershed-wide Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program. Karen will still be on board for Expedition 2005; her last official work day is scheduled for July 8th.

### CALENDAR OF COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

**June 15 - 18, 2005** - Save the Date – Expedition 2005 is Coming!

**September 24, 2005** - Greenway Challenge.

**October 8, 9 and 10** - Footsteps in History.